

Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman

Hearing Memorandum

February 23, 2018

To: All Federal Lands Subcommittee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff—Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on **H.R. 1992 (Rep. Andy Barr)**, To direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the site of the Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park in Jessamine County, Kentucky, and for other purposes.
February 28, 2018, 2:00 PM; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 1992, “*Camp Nelson Heritage Park Study Act*”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 1992, introduced by Representative Andy Barr (R-KY-06), directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park in Jessamine County, Kentucky, to determine the national significance of the site and its suitability for inclusion in the National Park System.

Cosponsors

Rep. Marcia L. Fudge [D-OH-11]

Witnesses

The Honorable Andy Barr
Member of Congress, Kentucky’s 6th District

Dr. Stephen McBride
Director of Interpretations and Archaeology
Camp Nelson Civil War Park
Nicholasville, KY

Background

Located in southern Jessamine County, Kentucky, and founded in 1863, Camp Nelson was constructed by Major General Ambrose Burnside and the 9th Corps of the Army of Ohio, to serve as a supply depot, hospital facility and training and recruiting center for the Union Army during the Civil War.

Camp Nelson provided the Union Army with over 10,000 African American soldiers, making it the third largest recruiting and training depot for African American soldiers in the

country. African American troops were trained and served at Camp Nelson, but as freed slaves, many had no option but to bring their families along with them to the camp as they trained to fight.

In November 1864, Brigadier General Speed S. Fry ordered the families staying with the soldiers out of the camp. Unfortunately, the expulsion from the camp resulted in more than one hundred refugees dying from exposure due to the freezing temperatures.

Later, an official refugee site was established and run by the Army and the American Missionary Association. Camp Nelson and this refugee site served as a shelter for over 3,000 of the soldiers' wives and children. The original Camp Nelson covered 4,000 acres and has roughly 300 buildings including a school, hospital and mess hall, among other accommodations.¹

In 1998, Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park was established by the Jessamine County Fiscal Court using local, State and federal funds to preserve large tracts of land, construct a visitor center, construct replica barracks, recreate a fort, develop informational trails, and educate the public.

Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park was designated as part of the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom in 2008 and was later designated as a National Historic Landmark in 2013.

H.R. 1992 directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park to determine the national significance of the site and its suitability for inclusion as a unit of the National Park System.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.

¹ Welcome to Camp Nelson, Camp Nelson Restoration and Preservation Foundation, Retrieved from <http://www.campnelson.org/introduction.htm>